

more quickly, is pharmaceuticals. Some say we have an overutilization of pharmaceuticals. For many people, particularly the elderly, the cost is extremely high for pharmaceuticals and is unable to be handled by many people. We need to find a better way of distribution, find a better way of using generics, find a better way of examining the pharmaceutical requirements.

We had some meetings. In one case, we had a retired pharmacist take a look at the pharmaceutical needs of the people employed by his former company. He was able to reduce it substantially and still provide the same kind of health care. So there are a lot of things that we can do.

As to jobs and the economy, obviously, nobody is unaware of the fact that we need to do something there. We need to have a program. All we have heard in the last 2 weeks is criticism of the President's economic program. I believe the President has a very well-balanced effort at doing something about the economy. He does something initially with payments, such as child care, reduction of income tax withholding, which would put more dollars in right away. I suppose we can talk about the size of the package because of dividends on some of the payments that are made. But the fact is, it is a balanced program that has initial impact; it has long-term kinds of tax reductions that create jobs.

Now, it is one thing to just sling money out there, which some folks like to do. The real answer is to develop jobs so people have them long term, and that is what it is all about.

On judicial nominations, we are behind from last year. We still haven't organized a committee to do that.

We are faced with lots of opportunities to do some things that need to be done. Yet here we are waiting to begin to move. I think the pressure needs to be on the leadership to resolve this issue and get us into a position to move forward so we can deal—as we are here to do—with the issues before us and resolve many of the questions that are pending.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business be extended until 4 p.m. and the time be equally divided in the usual form, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FUNDING GOVERNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, hopefully we will be able to move forward on the most important matter facing the country today, in my opinion, and that is getting something done to be able to fund Government.

As the Democratic leader said earlier today, we all recognize the country is in a deep economic decline. Last month alone we lost over 101,000 jobs as reported by the Department of Labor. As we talked earlier this morning, we need only look at the article in the Wall Street Journal today which is entitled, "Slump in Job Market Is Longest in Decades. Near-term Prospects For Workers Remain Grim."

This is Monday. Thursday is fast approaching, and that is when people are always saying they have to catch a plane. If we cannot complete our business this week and deal with the 11 appropriations bills, we should work next week. The majority leader should tell everybody right now that they should put on hold their business for next week, that this is an important time for the country. With the economy being in the recession and no prospects in the near future of getting out of it, and the only proposal we have coming from the White House is to give more tax cuts to the rich—and from the reports in the press today part of the tax dividends would go to both the President and Vice President in the sums of hundreds of thousands of dollars if this crazy dividend scheme goes through—hopefully we would work through next week, if necessary, to deal with the problems the country faces.

There is no plan for creating jobs. It seems the only answer that comes from the administration to every problem is more tax cuts for the wealthy.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. I thank the Chair.

THE NATION'S ECONOMY

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, last Thursday I spoke at some length about the Nation's economy and pointed out what I thought at that time were some of the deficiencies in the President's plan for economic recovery.

In my remarks on Thursday, in reading them over in the RECORD, I thought maybe I might have been a little harsh; maybe my remarks were a little too pointed in that they referred to the President's economic plan as one that would unduly benefit the wealthiest in our country and that would not do much to really help working Americans.

After reading the newspapers over the weekend, I have come to the conclusion that what I said on Thursday was not nearly as harsh a judgment on the President's economic policy as that of some of our foremost economic thinkers and writers in America today.

So after reading these newspapers this weekend, I thought I would call the attention of my colleagues and others to several articles that appeared on this topic over the weekend, which I think are graphic in their detail and analysis of how awful the President's economic program is, and will be for this country if we enact his latest version.

The first thing I saw was, on Saturday morning, a front-page article that said the economy lost 100,000 jobs in December. The unemployment rate remains at an 8-year high. This was on the front page of the Washington Post on January 11:

U.S. companies shed more than 100,000 jobs last month, reducing payrolls to their lowest level since the recession began in early 2001, while the unemployment rate remained at 6 percent, its eight-year high, the Labor Department reported yesterday.

Again, unemployment is high and continues to get worse. So clearly we have to do something in this country to stem the rising tide of people who are not working.

Looking back a couple of years ago to when the first economic downturn started, when the President put his recovery program into place, in 2001, it is clear it is not working. We are 18 months later and it is not working. It is going in the wrong direction. So do we keep going down that road or do we start to make some changes? That is what we have to do. We have to recognize we are going down the wrong road and we have to make some changes.

The President has now proclaimed his new economic program to build on the misguided one of 2001. This is a David Broder column from Sunday's Washington Post entitled: "It Reeks of Politics." I wondered what he was talking about. I thought maybe he was talking about judicial appointments or something like that—"It Reeks of Politics." No. What Mr. Broder was talking about was the economic program. I will quote some parts of it.